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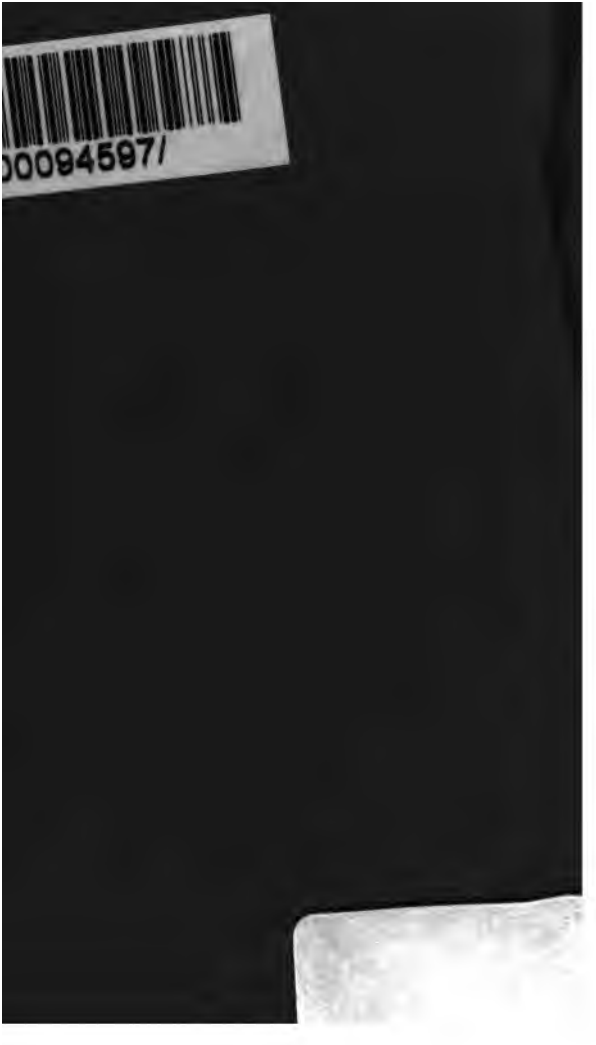
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The Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures

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INSPIRATION

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THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

BY THE

VERY REV. DANIEL BAGOT, D.D., DEAN,

LATE DEAN OF DROMORE AND
VICAR-GENERAL OF NEWRY AND MORNE,
AND CHAPLAIN TO LORDS LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.



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THE INSPIRATION

OF

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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2 *Tim.* iii. 15.—'And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures. . . . .'

16.—'All scripture is given by inspiration of God. . . . .'

WE should carefully attend to the distinction which there is between the phrase, 'Holy Scriptures,' in the 15th verse of this passage, and the phrase, 'all Scripture,' in the 16th verse. By the former the Apostle refers chiefly, and almost exclusively, to the Old Testament; but by the word 'Scripture,' in the 16th verse, as it is qualified by the word 'all,' he refers to every book written under the

guidance of the Spirit of God, including his own Epistles, which the Apostle Peter classifies under the designation of Scripture, in 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16, 'Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all *his* Epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.' Now, in entering upon a discussion of the important question of the inspiration of the Scriptures, it is necessary in the first instance to understand explicitly what books we should recognise as constituting the Scriptures, or, to use the technical phrase, the first step in the investigation of this subject is to determine what is the canon of Scripture. The word CANON signifies a rule, and by it is meant the list or catalogue of books which are pronounced by

competent authority to be our proper rule of faith and practice. I say then, at once, that the competent authority to determine what is the canon is that of the primitive Catholic Church, not of the modern Catholic Church, much less of the modern Roman Catholic Church, but, I repeat it, of the primitive Catholic Church, which was for some time cotemporaneous with the Apostles. She adopted the Old Testament Scriptures, consisting of thirty-nine books, from the Jewish Church, to whose care and keeping had been committed these oracles of God (Rom. iii. 2); and she has, under the providential guidance of Him who is head over all things to His Church, incorporated these with the Scriptures of the New Testament, consisting of twenty-seven books, which were naturally entrusted to her care, so that the entire should constitute our rule of faith and practice. And the Church, as the Librarian of the Scriptures, or, as the Twentieth

Article calls her, 'as the witness and keeper of Holy Writ,' has transmitted and handed them down through every subsequent age as genuine and authentic records of sacred history and of divine truth. In compliance with this office of handing down the Scriptures from age to age, our branch of the Holy Catholic Church has appointed that, at the ordination of deacons, the officiating bishop should hand a New Testament to those whom he is ordaining, and that at the ordination of priests and consecration of bishops, he should hand a Bible to each.

It is also necessary that we should believe in the genuineness and authenticity of Scripture. By these we mean that the Scriptures were written by the authors to whom the respective books are ascribed, and that they relate matters of fact, as they actually took place. For this we rely, not upon the immediate and present testimony of the Church of our

day, but upon the constantly transmitted testimony of the Catholic Church, commencing with the primitive Apostolic Church, and flowing down like a stream through every subsequent age to our own. And in addition to this positive testimony in support of the canon and of the genuineness and authenticity of Scripture, we have another kind of evidence which is exceeding valuable, namely, the constantly transmitted admission of the enemies of Christianity, and of heretics and schismatics, who have never called these facts in question. In short, there is not a single ancient book in existence for the genuineness and authenticity of which we have proof which can be at all compared, either as to quantity or quality, with the overwhelming evidence which we have for the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible. And we might define the Church to be, in one point of view, a sacred corporation specially organized and

appointed to be a permanent standing witness to the truthfulness and divine origin of the Holy Scriptures.

But to come to the important question of inspiration. The word in the original is *θεόπνευστος*, which in its theological sense denotes the act of God, the Holy Spirit breathing, as it were, into or upon the mind of a man, in order to produce a certain effect or condition for the accomplishment of certain ends. We may illustrate this, for instance, by what is said in Gen. ii. 7, that God breathed into Adam the breath of life, in consequence of which he became a living soul. This word is sometimes used to denote the ordinary influence of the Spirit by which a man is led to apprehend religious truth, and is moved or incited to do such things as are pleasing to God. In this sense we find it written in Job, xxxii. 8, 'There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.'

And in our Church Service we have the following petitions, in the Collect for the fifth Sunday after Easter—'Grant that by Thy holy *inspiration* we may think those things that be good;' and at the beginning of the Communion Service: 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the *inspiration* of Thy Holy Spirit.' In these petitions the word refers to the ordinary agency of the Holy Spirit in the sanctification of believers. But what we have now to consider is that specific and particular sense in which the word is applied to the Scriptures by St. Paul, where he says that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' And here I at once define inspiration, in this sense, to be—

That peculiar and supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost upon the minds of the sacred writers, by which they were led to select, to compose, or to receive such information as God was pleased should be written for our learning, and by which they were

assisted and guided in committing the same to writing, so that the result is that what they wrote is properly designated the Word of God, or the Holy Scriptures.

And now I come to a very important part of the subject. With reference to this question of the inspiration of the Bible, there is much prevalent and popular error afloat. For instance, the common notion entertained of it is this—that it is by inspiration, or through inspiration as the channel, that the subject-matter of the Bible has been imparted or conveyed. This notion has, no doubt, been caused by the unfortunate insertion of the words '*given by*,' in the authorised version of 2 Tim. iii. 16, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' But there is nothing in the original corresponding with these words. The proper rendering of the Greek is, 'All Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'

Inspiration is not the channel through which the matter which was to be written came, but it refers to the peculiar character which has been impressed upon the sacred Scriptures by the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit leading the authors to commit to writing subject-matter which they became acquainted with through other means, and superintending them in the execution of their assigned work, so that the Scriptures are inspired because their authors were inspired. From the commencement to the end of the Bible, not one single statement or sentiment came through inspiration. Just as God's breathing into Adam did not create or convey the material of which his body was composed, which came from another source, for he was made of the dust of the ground, so God's breathing, as it were, into the minds of the sacred writers, did not convey to them the information which they were to write, the knowledge of which they

derived from other and different sources than through this inspiration.

But from what source, then, have the sacred writers procured or derived the subject-matter of the Holy Scriptures? To this I reply, that there are seven principal channels, or, as I may call them, seven gateways, through which the material which the Bible contains has come. These are as follows—Observation, Information, Compilation, Meditation, Imagination, Argumentation, and Revelation. Let me explain these—

1. Observation, producing personal knowledge. We have abundant instances of this. In the 19th chapter of St. John's Gospel, at the 34th verse, we read that 'one of the soldiers with a spear pierced the Saviour's side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.' Now, I ask, how did St. John become acquainted with that circumstance? He tells us himself that it was by personal observation,

for he immediately adds in the next verse, 'he that saw it bare record;' but, of course, I maintain that he has written the account of it, as he wrote his entire Gospel, under the guidance of inspiration. He also says in his first Epistle, ch. i. 1, 3, 'That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life .... that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.' More decisive and emphatic language could not have been employed by the Apostle for asserting that he acquired his knowledge of the history of Christ from personal observation.

2. Information, or the being made acquainted with certain facts by the testimony of others. We have a sufficient illustration of this in the preface to the Gospel of St. Luke: 'Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most

surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee . . . .' Thus it is evident that St. Luke acquired the knowledge of what he wrote from the information of eyewitnesses, but he committed that information to writing by the direction and guidance of inspiration.

3. Compilation, or the extracting of information from previously written books or documents. For instance, the genealogies which we find in Scripture were evidently compiled from Jewish records, and much that is contained in the Pentateuch, and in the Book of Joshua, and in the historical books of the Old Testament, was compiled from previously existing histories. (See Josh. x. 13; 2 Sam. i. 18; 1 Chron. ix. 1; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xii. 15; xx. 34.)

Still the Holy Spirit led Moses and the other authors of these books to compile and to incorporate the material thus obtained into their histories, so as to be a constituent portion of inspired Scriptures.

4. Meditation, or the contemplation of a devout and pious mind chiefly upon sacred and spiritual subjects. What, for example, are many of the Psalms of David? Simply, to a great degree, expressions of the feelings of the Psalmist after reflecting upon important religious themes, referring to the glory of God, the character and work of Christ, his own personal experience, and other subjects. In the 5th Psalm he says, 'Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my meditation;' and in the 19th Psalm, 'Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight.' And here I may remark that a plenary and verbal inspiration would very much destroy the value of those portions of Scripture which refer to Christian experience. If I

could believe that every sentiment and expression of devout feeling which I find written in the Book of Psalms and elsewhere, were really and only the utterance of the Holy Ghost, employing David and others as merely mechanical machines to record them, and that they were not the genuine heartfelt expressions of the feelings and experience of David or of others of like passions with myself, those portions of Scripture would be almost, if not entirely, practically useless. But when I regard them as the legitimate expressions of the inward reflections and meditations of pious and devout minds, under the ordinary sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, I may then derive comfort and edification from an humble and prayerful contemplation of their contents. We may apply the principle contained in these remarks to the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. In the commencement of the former we are distinctly told that they are the 'Proverbs of

Solomon,' or the recorded expressions of his personal wisdom. These books simply give us the sentiments and opinions of their authors upon the subjects of which they treat, but still these are placed upon record in the Bible under the guidance of inspiration, for 'all Scripture' (*πᾶσα γραφὴ*, all Scripture when being written) is inspired of God.

We may here notice how the occurrence in the Bible of objectionable sentiments, such as, for instance, we find in the imprecatory Psalms, is to be accounted for. These were the outpourings of the sinful natures and the carnal minds of those who gave utterance to them when unrestrained by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, which have yet been recorded by inspiration on the principle laid down by St. Paul in 1 Cor. x. 6-11, on which the delinquencies of the Jews have been described in the Old Testament. They 'have been written for our admonition' that we should avoid the

manifestation of similar feelings and dispositions, and cultivate the opposite fruits of the Spirit, which are love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, brotherly kindness, charity; that we should let 'all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from us, with all malice, and be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.'

5. Imagination, or the power of illustrating facts and statements by figures, metaphors, and similes, as, for instance, in the Book of Psalms and in the prophets, more especially in the sublime writings of Isaiah.

6. Argumentation, or the exercise of the reasoning faculties upon doctrinal and other subjects, as in the Epistles of St. Paul, more especially to the Romans and Galatians, which contain the discussions of a highly talented and cultivated mind upon the leading truths of the Gospel,

7. Revelation, or the direct and immediate communication of truth from God Himself. The prophecies of Scripture and the knowledge which the Apostles possessed of the doctrines of the Gospel came through this channel. We read, for instance, in 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;' and in 2 Pet. i. 20, 21, '. . . no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation (or of the prophet's own starting or invention): for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' Then as to the doctrines of the Gospel, we have the declaration of St. Paul that he received his knowledge of these by

direct revelation, as in Gal. i. 10, 11, where he says, '. . . I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;' and in 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10, 'But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things (that is—the blessings of the Gospel) which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,' as if he had said, My knowledge of the Gospel has not been acquired by observation, or information, or meditation, or imagination, but by immediate revelation from Jesus Christ by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. And with respect to the prophecies of Scripture and the statements of the doctrines of the Gospel, I decidedly hold what is called plenary or verbal inspiration, or that there was a distinct suggestion to the prophets and apostles of the

very words they should employ. It was the Spirit of Christ in the prophets that testified even when the prophets themselves did not fully understand the predictions to which they were giving utterance as instruments of the Holy Ghost, for holy men of God spake (or expressed their prophecies in words) as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And St. Paul, after having stated in 1 Cor. ii. 10, that his knowledge of the Gospel came by revelation, immediately adds in verse 13, 'which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.'

Thus we see what a vast difference there is between revelation and inspiration, though they have been confounded, and even regarded as synonymous by many. Revelation is only one of the channels through which a portion of the contents of Scripture has come. Inspiration is the guiding and controlling agency of the Spirit of God, by

which the writers were led to select by observation or information or compilation, to compose by meditation, imagination, or argumentation, or to receive by revelation, such material as God intended should constitute the subject-matter of the Bible, and by which they were assisted in committing the same to writing; so that the Bible is as the Twentieth Article of the Church calls it, 'God's word written,' or as St. Paul calls it in Eph. vi. 17, 'The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'

As to the mode and manner of inspiration, we cannot explain it. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit,' and we might also say, 'So is every one that is inspired of the Spirit.' But we may form some idea of the reality and effects of inspiration from the following passages—'Then opened he their understanding that they might

understand the Scriptures.' (Luke, xxiv. 45.) 'The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.' (Luke, xii. 12.) 'When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.' (John, xvi. 13.) And there is a passage in 2 Pet. iii. 15, which suggests as clear and tangible an idea as we can have of the way in which the Holy Spirit inspired the sacred writers; it is as follows—'And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you.' Just as much wisdom was given and just as much teaching and guiding power of the Holy Ghost was vouchsafed to the sacred writers as was required by the nature and exigency of what they were employed and commissioned to write.

And now we are prepared to understand the meaning of two propositions which have caused much discussion in connexion

with the question of the inspiration of the Scriptures. I allude to the following statements—1, The Bible is the word of God; and 2, The Bible only contains the word of God. These two propositions are generally supposed to be contradictory to each other, whereas they are both true according to the definition which we give of the phrase, 'the word of God.' If we define 'the word of God' to be what God *reveals*, then the Bible only *contains* the word of God, for a very small portion of the contents of the Bible has come through revelation; but if we define 'the word of God' to be what God *inspires*, then the Bible *is* the word of God, for from the commencement of Genesis to the end of the Revelation all Scripture is inspired of God. No matter through what channel the subject-matter has come, the sacred writers, as we have already stated, were directed and guided by the Spirit of God in selecting or composing or

receiving, 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime for our learning.'

I now come to the next branch of the subject—to suggest a few out of many positive proofs that the Holy Scriptures are inspired, or that the sacred writers were guided by the Holy Spirit, so that what they have written is the word of God, and the sacred depository of the knowledge of His will and purposes which He has been pleased to give to man.

1. The first proof which I advance is the transmitted testimony of the Church. The Apostolic Primitive Church regarded and received the Scriptures as the inspired word of God. The Old Testament had been in the custody of the Jewish Church, from which the Christian Church received it, and all the books of the New Testament came into the care and keeping of the Christian Church, which has handed them down from age to age as the inspired word of God.

Observe how St. Paul, who is a fair representative and spokesman of the Apostolic Church, speaks of the Old Testament. In Acts, xxviii. 25, he says, 'Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias unto our fathers.' In Rom. iii. 2, he calls the Old Testament 'the oracles of God;' in Heb. i. 1, we read, 'God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets;' and in Heb. iii. 7, 'Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice.' St. Peter also must be regarded as a fair representative of the Church of his day, but observe how he speaks of the prophecies of the Old Testament, 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.' (1 Pet. i. 10, 11.) And

in his second Epistle, when referring to the two leading evidences for the truth of Christianity—namely, miracles and prophecy—after having mentioned the former, especially the miracle of the transfiguration, he says, 'We have also a more sure word of prophecy'—that is, a more sure evidence than even miracles, namely, prophecy—'whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place until the day dawn and the day star arise, in your hearts knowing this first,' that is, before you can regard prophecy as a more sure evidence than miracles, you must first know in your hearts, or have an inward conviction, 'that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation,' or as I have already explained this phrase for another purpose, of the prophets' own invention or starting—the prophets did not start forth upon the racecourse of prophecy of their own suggestion; they did not run like false prophets without God having sent them (Jer.

xxiii. 21), but 'the Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it' (Ps. lxviii. 11); or, as St. Peter goes on to say, 'The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved'—or borne on by the impulse of inspiration—'by the Holy Ghost.' (2 Pet. i. 16-21.) Again in 2 Pet. iii. 15, St. Peter having said of St. Paul that he was guided by the wisdom given unto him in writing his Epistles, in the next verse adds, 'As also in all his epistles speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest as they do also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction,' in which his using the phrase, 'the other Scriptures,' clearly shows that St. Peter considered the Epistles of Paul to be a portion of THE SCRIPTURES, or of the written word of God, for this is the sense in which the words 'Scriptures' and 'Scrip-

ture,' which occur forty-four times in the Bible, are invariably used. We may add that an acknowledgment, or a taking for granted, that the Old Testament contains a revelation from God pervades the writings of the New Testament; as, for instance, we read in Luke, i. 70, 'As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began.'

2. The next proof which I advance for the inspiration of the Old Testament is derived from the testimony of Christ Himself. It consisted in His day, as it does now, of three parts or divisions. These are mentioned in Luke, xxiv. 44, by Christ Himself, 'These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the LAW OF MOSES and in the PROPHETS and in the PSALMS.' Whenever he referred to the Old Testament Scriptures, he did so with implicit reverence, recognising them as the inspired word of

God, and as an infallible standard and rule of doctrine and practice. For instance, when arguing with the Pharisees, He said, after quoting the fifth commandment, 'Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.' (Matt. xv. 6.) On another occasion He said, 'the Scripture,' that is, what is written in the Old Testament, 'cannot be broken.' (John, x. 35.) He speaks, as recorded in Matt. xxiv. 15, of Daniel as a prophet, 'when ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.' In the fifth chapter of St. John, ver. 39, He says, 'Search,' or, as it might be rendered, 'Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.' In the synagogue at Nazareth, He opened the Book of the prophet Esaias and read a portion of the 61st chapter, directly applying it to Himself as a prediction delivered about 700 years before. (Luke, iv. 16-21.)

In Matt. xxii. 43, we read, 'How, then, doth David in spirit?' or speaking by the Holy Spirit, or, as it is more distinctly expressed in the parallel passage in Mark, xii. 36, 'David himself said by the Holy Ghost.' And let us notice what honour our great Redeemer has conferred upon that portion of the Bible which has been so much assailed in our day—I allude to the Pentateuch—that solid granite foundation upon which all the subsequent superstructure of God's holy word may be said to rest. When He was undergoing the severe ordeal of His temptation in the wilderness it was from the armoury of the Pentateuch that He drew the weapons with which He gained a decisive victory over His enemy and ours. And in His argument with the Sadducees with reference to the resurrection, it was from the Pentateuch that He refuted and put them to silence. (Matt. xxii. 29-32.) Our blessed Saviour, during the entire of

His manifestation in the flesh, regarded the Old Testament Scriptures as containing in them the previously mapped life which He by His own direct and immediate management was to live out, a life of which the grand outline, as well as many of its incidents and details, were pictured and portrayed in the prophecies of the Old Testament. And here I cannot avoid remarking, though it is not directly connected with my present argument, that this is a most powerful proof that Christ was more than man. Cyrus had to fulfil a previously mapped out course of acting, but, as well as others whom God employs as instruments for accomplishing His providential intentions, He did not know it. 'I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me;' 'I girded thee, though thou hast not known me,' God said to Cyrus. (Isa. xlv. 4, 5.) But Christ by His own self-contrived agency had to steer His way when on earth through all opposition of His enemies, both

visible and invisible, so as to realise in His personal experience the fulfilment of all the predictions, in their proper place and order, which the Old Testament contained with reference to Him, and He would not die until He had done so, for it is written in John, xix. 28, 30, 'After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. . . . When Jesus, therefore, had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished,' (as if He had said there was but one prediction remaining to be accomplished which is written in Ps. lxix. 21,) 'and (then, but not till then) he bowed the head and gave up the ghost.' In short, the Old Testament was our Saviour's rule and guide, and He regarded it and conformed to it as the inspired word of God; it was emphatically THE SAVIOUR'S BIBLE.

3. The next proof which I advance for the inspiration of the Bible, is derived from a consideration of the contents and cha-

racter of the Bible itself. It contains predictions which have been literally and accurately accomplished, not merely with reference to the history of Christ, but also to the political destinies of empires and monarchies. We might refer to the prophecy of Jacob that the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh came (Gen. xlix. 10); to the Messianic prophecies of Isaiah, especially in the 7th, the 9th, and 53rd chapters; to the prophecy of Micah of the Saviour's birthplace (Micah, v. 2), of Daniel and of Malachi, as to the time of His advent (Dan. ix. 24; Mal. iii. 1); and to the many predictions in the book of Psalms, of many remarkable and minute circumstances in the future life of Christ. Then let us notice the unity of structure which pervades the Bible from the commencement to the end. One grand and commanding theme, running on through its pages from age to age during the 1500 years in which its constituent portions were

being accumulated,—even Christ the Redeemer and Saviour of man, prefigured in types and promises and prophecies as the Seed of the woman, the Paschal lamb, the Prophet like unto Moses, the Prince of peace, the Plant of renown, the Root out of a dry ground, the Lord our righteousness, the Desire of all nations, the Shepherd of Israel, the Root and Offspring of David, the Sun of righteousness rising with healing in His wings, all culminating and realised in the marvellous and unique history of Jesus of Nazareth, the Word made flesh, the Man of sorrows, the King of kings and Lord of lords. We may also include in our reasoning under this head, the great fact that the Bible teaches the noblest and the purest morality; that it contains inexhaustible material for instruction, for meditation, and for comfort; that it alone gives worthy and adequate views of the nature of God, and of the origin and condition of man. We may also take into

account the unrivalled sublimity of style in many parts of it; the spirituality of its design; its astonishing efficacy in moulding and modifying human character, and in forming principles which have regulated the conduct of society in every rank of life, and have characterised and controlled legislation in every country where it has become known. Now my argument from this survey of the contents and character of Scripture is this,—that there must have been one continued superintending agency, one presiding spirit, as it were, behind the scenes, guiding and superintending the several authors, conferring upon them the gift of prophecy, and leading to the production of this unity of subject and harmony of design. Thus the Bible, like the sun in the heavens, carries upon its disc and surface evidence of its divine Original, and bears witness of itself that it has been written by the inspiration of God.

And we have indirect proof of the in-

spiration of the New Testament in the promises which Christ gave to His Apostles of the gifts of the Holy Ghost; for the realisation of these promises must, as we maintain, attach to the Scriptures of the New Testament the same divine character and authority which Christ invariably recognised as belonging to the Scriptures of the Old. In the latter part of St. John's Gospel, we find four distinct promises of the supernatural guidance and teaching of the Holy Ghost. (1.) That He would recall to the memories of the Apostles all the information and instruction which Christ had given them during His ministry amongst them,—'He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' (John, xiv. 26.) (2.) That He would impart to them all additional truth necessary for salvation,—'He shall teach you all things.' (John, xiv. 26.) (3.) That He would reveal to them a knowledge of future events, so far as would be neces-

sary for the guidance and consolation of the Church,—'He will show you things to come.' (John, xvi. 13.) And (4), All the benefits which they were to derive, in the way of teaching, from the presence of the Holy Spirit, are comprised in this comprehensive declaration, 'He will guide you into all truth.' (John, xvi. 13.) Now it is impossible to suppose that these and other similar promises were not to apply to what the Apostles and disciples of Christ were to write 'for our learning,' as well as to what they were to speak. Their written communications would necessarily be of equal value and importance with their oral statements. The Gospels and Epistles obviously and naturally contain in a solidified, abiding, and legible form, the same facts and doctrines which must have constituted the subject-matter of the spoken and audible instructions of the Apostles and disciples of Christ. When St. Peter, for example, says, 'I will not be negligent to

put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth; yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;' and then immediately adds, 'Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance' (2 Pet. i. 12, 13, 15), it is quite clear that he must have considered that the Epistles which he was to leave behind him, and which we may thus infer would treat of the same important truths which he had so often preached, should be regarded as possessing the same divine character and sanction as his personal and oral instructions.

Such is a specimen of the positive arguments by which it is proved that the Bible, which has been entrusted to the care of the Church, and has been handed down to us, contains revelations from God, and has been written under the superintendence of

the Holy Ghost. All of these arguments may be summed up in the clear and concise statement of the Apostle, that 'all Scripture is inspired of God.' And thus this book may be compared to a tree of life planted under the direction of God Himself, first bearing the buds and blossoms and branches of prophecies and types, and historical and biographical facts; and then expanding into the flowers and fruits of Gospel narratives and evangelical doctrines, and scattering abroad its leaves for the healing of the nations.

I now proceed to a brief consideration of a few of the most common objections which are advanced against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures:—

1. We are told that the manuscripts of Scripture which are extant, contain several grammatical errors and many variations from each other. This is no doubt a fact: but what is our argument? Not that versions or copies of the Scriptures are

inspired as such, but that the original Scriptures were inspired because their authors wrote under divine superintendence. It has indeed been permitted that in the course of time, through the inadvertencies of transcribers and translators, some slight specks or spots may have gathered upon the external surface of the copies without affecting the inherent sense and spirit of the Bible, and without interfering with the inspiration and divine authority of the substantial subject-matter of the word of God, which, as it has been handed down by the Church and received by us, is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness; and amply sufficient to promote the salvation of sinners, the sanctification of believers, and the edification of the Church. (See Ps. xix. 8; cxix. 105; John, v. 39; xx. 31; Rom. iv. 23, 24; xv. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 10, 11; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.) We should be careful not to confound the *original inspiration* of the Scriptures

with a supposed subsequent and perpetually continued *miraculous preservation:* these two are perfectly distinct, and the existence of the former does not necessarily imply or require the existence of the latter. God has given the Bible to man, a sinful and fallible being, just as He has given to him innumerable other blessings. Man may have marred and abused the gifts of God, and, as they have passed through his hands, they may have contracted something that may have impaired their beauty or their brightness. Thus may it have been with respect to the Scriptures, which must ever be esteemed as the chief among ten thousand of those good and perfect gifts which have been conferred by the bountiful and benignant kindness of our great and benevolent Creator. But what is the real fact with reference to almost all of these errors and variations? We may form a judgment of their trivial and insignificant character from this circumstance,—that Dr.

Kennicott spent many years of his life in a minute examination and comparison of about 600 manuscripts, and what was the result? He said that he had lost his time, inasmuch as he had discovered no variations of any essential consequence. I think, however, that a little reflection will lead us to say that he had not lost his time, for he was enabled to deliver a verdict of the most important value to the Christian,—that he had found some grammatical errors and some variations in the multitude of manuscripts which he had inspected, but not one single variation which in the smallest degree affected any article of faith or any rule of practice. Let me give an illustration of some of these variations which have been made so much of by the opponents of inspiration. Some persons, for example, spell the word honour with a *u*, and some without it; some may spell the word welcome with one *l*, and some with two. Variations analogous to these have

been found, or such as we might discover by comparing the mode of spelling employed in one age with that employed in another, by Spenser or Chaucer, in their day, with that employed by Cowper or Tennyson in ours. How, then, can such insignificant variations or blemishes, such 'spot or wrinkle or any such thing,' at all impair the innate and essential character and value of the Bible? They may be compared to chips and fractures upon the external walls and buttresses of a cathedral, which have been caused by exposure to rains and storms, but which do not in the slightest degree interfere with the grand and majestic outline of its external architecture, or with the imposing magnificence and suitability of its internal structure and arrangements. They may be compared to indentations upon a coin of gold, which may have slightly marred its shape and tarnished its lustre, as it has been handed down through successive generations, but

have not effaced a sufficient distinctness of its image or superscription, or depreciated its intrinsic preciousness and its currency. Or look to the bright sun that shines in the canopy of heaven above us, and which its omnipotent Creator has made to be the unrivalled monarch of the skies; we sometimes observe upon his disc and surface what the astronomer calls spots; but do these interfere with his usefulness or his splendour? Does he not still send down his light to guide man in the performance of his daily occupations? Thus many of the variations in the manuscripts of the Bible are of no real consequence, while their existence tends to illustrate the great value of the science of Biblical exegesis and criticism, one great object of which is to ascertain, as nearly as possible, what was written in the original manuscripts of the inspired Scriptures. And I may here state my decided conviction that a revised translation of the Bible is most desirable. As accurate a translation

of the purest text that we now have as can be made by the eminent scholars who are now engaged in this most important work, will have the effect of removing many objections of the class which we have been just considering against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

I may here be reminded that there are some entire sentences in the original of our authorised translation which should be rejected as spurious, such as Acts, viii. 37; the the latter clause of Rom. viii. 1; and the celebrated passage in 1 John, v. 7, regarding the three heavenly witnesses. To this I reply, that if it has been clearly ascertained that two or three spurious passages have, in the course of time, found their way, by the inadvertency of transcribers or otherwise, into modern manuscripts or versions of the Bible, we may regard even this as a peculiar advantage, inasmuch as it impresses, by a kind of logical reaction, an irresistible force upon our confidence in the genuineness

and authenticity of all the rest of Scripture, about which there has been no similar ground for question. As to 1 John, v. 7, it cannot as yet be positively decided whether it is spurious or not, although the present evidence is against its genuineness; and therefore it should not be employed as an argument in support of the doctrine of the Trinity. But what difference does our non-use, or even rejection, of this text make? Simply this,—that instead of our having, say fifty proofs of the doctrine in question, we have only forty-nine.

2. The next objection against the inspiration of the Bible which we shall consider is,—the allegation that there are statements in it contradictory to the discoveries of science, especially of geology and astronomy. For instance, we are told that the narrative of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis is refuted by the discoveries of geology, which have clearly ascertained that the world is vastly older

than six thousand years, and that it could not have been created within the space of six ordinary days. But when we candidly look into that chapter, we shall find that there is no assertion in it that God created the world only six thousand years ago. What is there said is, that 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' which phrase, 'in the beginning,' does not specify any particular date, and it may in fact have been millions of millions of ages ago. Then, as to the transactions of the six days, the account of which commences with the third verse, they may have occurred after an interval of immeasurable length subsequent to the creation, during which the earth was, as described in the second verse, 'without form and void, and the Spirit of God was moving upon the face of the waters,' as the agent of some mysterious process which may have continued for an incalculable period, preparatory to the exercise of that omnipotent energy which God

began to put forth on what is called 'the first day,' not to create the earth, which had been summoned into existence long before, but to change the *earth* into an organized and furnished *world*, so as to make it a suitable residence for its destined inhabitant man. And then, as to the six days spoken of in this chapter, these were not necessarily ordinary days of twenty-four hours' duration. The word 'day,' as well as the word 'night,' is constantly used, on the well-understood principle of employing a definite term for an indefinite, to denote a period of time of *any* length. We find proof of this in the following passages:—in Ps. cxxxvii. 7, 'the day of Jerusalem;' in John, viii. 56, 'your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day;' in Rom. xiii, 12, 'the night is far spent, the day is at hand;' and the 'day of salvation,' mentioned in 2 Cor. vi. 2, stretches on until the second advent of Christ. The phraseology of the fourth Commandment does not interfere with this interpretation of the

word 'day,' for what it means may be this,—that as God made all things in six periods of time of incalculable length, called 'days,' but meaning indefinitely perhaps millions of years, and then rested on the seventh, so man should conform to this by analogy on a diminutive scale, by working during six periods of time of very short length, called 'days,' in a definite sense of twenty-four hours each, and then resting on the seventh: the seventh day, or Jewish Sabbath, being blessed of God, and consecrated by Him to be a miniature symbol and memorial of the day of rest upon which He entered after His creation work was finished. But perhaps the first chapter of Genesis may be the narrative of a microscopic vision, revealing to Moses the process and progress of creation. The Bible ends with the account of a vision vouchsafed to St. John, of things to happen hereafter: may it not commence with the account of a vision vouchsafed to Moses of things that had

taken place long before? I have no doubt, however, that the discoveries of geology will ultimately be found, not only not to contradict, but to correspond with the statements of Scripture, and that the first chapter of Genesis will be clearly ascertained to be what we maintain that it is,—a concise and abstract summary, or a short table of contents or consecutive index of geological facts. In the meantime this fascinating science is quite too young, and geologists may have been too hasty in deducing principles and drawing general conclusions from an inadequate or inaccurate induction. On the other hand, commentators may have given too premature and superficial interpretations of sacred Scripture, without taking advantage of the assistance which science is calculated to impart. To geology, for instance, even as far as it has made progress, we are much indebted, and are quite ready to acknowledge and recognise it as a handmaid to revelation. It has solved

many difficulties connected with the creation and past history of the globe on which we live; and instead of its discoveries being opposed to statements in the Word of God, it has even already become a valuable auxiliary for explaining many things apparently anomalous, and otherwise incredible, which the Bible contains.

It has also been alleged that the account of the creation of man which is given in the book of Genesis cannot be correct, as evidence has been discovered of the existence of man upon the earth long before the creation of Adam. But there is really nothing in the Scriptural account of the creation of man opposed to a belief in the existence of a pre-Adamite man. God is not represented in Gen. i. 26, as merely and only saying, 'Let us make man,' but 'Let us make man *in our image after our likeness*,' which may leave room for our maintaining that an inferior style of man had been already in existence, and that what he

was now proposing was to form a superior type of man by a substantive and peculiar exercise of creative power. The proofs which are advanced by geologists for the existence of a pre-Adamite man, such as the discovery of stone or flint instruments, are completely satisfied by a belief that this inferior kind of man existed, perhaps even hundreds or even thousands of years before Adam, while they are totally inadequate to prove the existence of man *in the image and likeness of God* prior to the time to which Gen i. 26, may refer. It may be said that this is a gratuitous hypothesis; still, even as such, it is quite consistent with the phraseology in Genesis, and is therefore amply sufficient as a possible solution of the objection which we have been considering.

Again, we are told that the language employed in recording the miracle which Joshua was permitted, as the instrument of Divine Omnipotence, to perform, is contrary

to the real facts of astronomy—'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed'—inasmuch as it is the earth that moves and not the sun. To this I reply, that when speaking of astronomical phenomena there are two distinct kinds of language which may be used, either—1, Language constructed on the principle of *definition*, or in conformity with what things really are; or—2, Language constructed on the principle of *description*, or in compliance with what things appear to be. The former is quite in its place in scientific or philosophical works; the latter is what men, and even scientific men, usually employ in ordinary conversation and for general and popular use, and is the kind of language constantly employed in speaking of the leading facts of astronomy. When we reflect upon the vast changes that take place in connexion with *many* subjects of human knowledge, how

theories are modified or abandoned as the results of a more accurate and penetrating scrutiny, of a more correct analysis, or of a more complete induction, we must see at once that the most convenient phraseology which can be universally and perpetually employed in treating of scientific subjects is the obvious and popular language which is constructed upon the principle of description, or in accordance with what things appear to all persons at all times, and in all places alike. This observation is peculiarly important in connexion with the science of astronomy, and in its practical application to the Bible more than to any other book, for the Bible is a book to be read *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*—for the instruction of all mankind in every age and in every nation of the world. We may also here make this general remark, that God never intended to convey scientific knowledge by revelation, or to anticipate in Scripture the philosophical investigations and discoveries

of future ages, thus interfering with and forestalling what is the legitimate province of judgment and reason. It is enough that there should be nothing in Scripture which, when properly interpreted and understood, shall be found to be opposed to the advancing investigations and discoveries of science.

3. The next objection against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures which I proceed to examine is—the assertion that they contain contradictory statements; that the four Evangelists, for instance, differ from each other in the accounts which they give of several details in their narratives of the life of Christ. Now we admit that there are *discrepancies* in some passages of Scripture as compared with others, but these are not to be confounded with *contradictions*, and they are quite natural between writers who took a survey of the same occurrences from different and more or less distant stand-*points, and* who, in perfect consistency with

their being under the guidance of inspiration, were left at liberty to condense, or to simplify, or to arrange their material, in the exercise of their own judgments. Besides, these discrepancies are most valuable as evidences of the independent character of the histories in which they occur; they preclude altogether the suspicion of preconcerted collusion, or that the Evangelists conspired and combined to write their Gospels containing fictions instead of facts; and they are proofs that we have four distinct and separate witnesses confirming each other's testimony to the essential transactions of our Saviour's life. The Evangelists acquired their knowledge either from personal observation, as St. Matthew and St. John, or from information, as St. Mark and St. Luke; and they must, as a matter of course, analogously with their differing temperaments, have varied in some trivial points in their respective narratives, while the substantial truth of each transaction or discourse

which they record is not in the slightest degree affected or impaired by these circumstantial variations, connected with comparatively unimportant incidents, which exist in the parallel accounts of them. Nor does this at all interfere with our belief that the Evangelists were led by the Holy Spirit to commit to writing 'that which they had seen and heard,' 1 John, i. 3, or to set forth a declaration of those things which had been 'delivered unto them by those which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word,' Luke, i. 1, 2.

But I must give a specimen of these alleged contradictions. In some cases accounts which differ are assumed to be parallel or to refer to the very same occurrence; in other cases statements differing in some trivial incidents from each other are found to be unimportant discrepancies which are easily reconciled, whilst their existence tends to give us strong confidence in the truth and reality of the facts which they record, and

in the substantial and essential accuracy of the writers who record them. Let me first refer to an instance under the former class, viz.: The account of the commission given by Christ to the Apostles before His ascension as related in Matt. xxviii. 18-20, is said to be contradictory to that which is recorded in Mark, xvi. 15-18. They are as follows :—

'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.' (Matt. xxviii. 18-20.)

'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' (Mark, xvi. 15-18.)

On a very slight comparison of these two accounts it will be seen that the supposition that they refer to one and the same commission is incorrect, and that they in reality refer to separate and distinct commissions. That which is recorded by St. Matthew was given on a mountain (ver. 16), it was prefaced by the declaration that all power was given unto Christ in heaven and in earth, and it does not contain any promise of miracles following from a belief of the Gospel; but it does contain a promise of the perpetual presence of Christ with the Apostles, and of course with the ministers of His Church who should succeed them, until the end of the age or dispensation which was then commencing. The commission recorded by St. Mark was given unto the eleven as they sat at meat (ver. 14); it was prefaced by Christ upbraiding them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had *seen Him* after He was risen, and it does not

contain any promise of His perpetual presence, but it does contain a promise of the beneficial results of believing, and of miraculous signs following them that believe. In fact, the commission recorded by St. Matthew may be called THE PERMANENT COMMISSION, and that which is recorded by St. Mark THE TEMPORARY COMMISSION. The latter was given to the Apostles exclusively, as witnesses of the resurrection of Christ, and it contained a promise which was fulfilled in the Lord working with them when they went forth and preached everywhere, and confirming their word with signs following (ver. 20), in order to compensate for the incredulity and hardness of heart of those who doubted the real occurrence of that great event (ver. 14). And we may observe here that this accounts for the cessation of miracles in the Church: when the witnesses of the resurrection died, miracles entirely ceased. Their testimony has been placed upon record in the New Testament,

and faithfully transmitted by the Church into whose care and custody it was given.

I now come to the consideration of another alleged contradiction upon which great stress has been laid by the opponents of inspiration,—that the four evangelists all give different accounts of the inscription which was written upon the cross. The four accounts are as follows:—

In Matt. xxvii. 37.	In Mark, xv. 26.	In Luke, xxiii. 38.	In John, xix. 19.
'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'	'The King of the Jews.'	'This is the King of the Jews.'	'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.'

Now let us notice the logical fallacy upon which this objection is based. It is taken for granted that each and all of the four Evangelists profess to give the inscription in its integrity and completeness, whereas not one of them proposes to give the entire inscription. St. Matthew says, 'They set up over his head his accusation written;' St. Mark says, 'The superscription of his

accusation was written over;' St. Luke says, 'A superscription was written over him;' and St. John says, 'Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross, and the writing was,' &c. In order to ascertain, then, what was the entire and complete inscription, we must compare and combine the four accounts, assuming that the four Evangelists, writing under the guidance of inspiration, all state what was the fact. Thus: the words 'THIS IS' were written, because St. Matthew and St. Luke say so; the words 'OF NAZARETH' were written, because St. John says so; and the words 'THE KING OF THE JEWS'—(a designation which Christ claimed as His proper '*title*,' Matt. xxvii. 11, and on the ground of which claim an '*accusation*' was advanced against him, John, xix. 12)—were written, because all the Evangelists say so. So that we thus ascertain the entire inscription to have been—'THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS,' by simply doing honour to

the word of God, and acting upon the principle that the Evangelists all state the truth.

4. The last objection frequently advanced against the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures to which I shall refer, is drawn from a consideration of the different characters of the books and of the varieties of style in the several writers. It is argued that, in consequence of these, all the books could not have been written under the guidance or superintendence of the same Holy Spirit. But I reply to this that it is perfectly consistent with a correct view of inspiration that the Holy Ghost should have employed men of different talents and habits of thought and expression, and who would be inclined to contemplate sacred truths and occurrences from different standpoints, to record what he considered necessary to be written for our learning, without its being necessary to reduce them all to one uniform and monotonous standard of intellectual capacity

or literary taste. The Holy Spirit did not make use of the sacred writers as so many unconscious machines or pipes, as it were, through which the stream of truth was to flow, but employed them as rational and thinking beings, stimulating and exercising all the faculties with which they were endowed,—their memories, their judgments, and their powers of observation, contemplation, and reasoning. And it is remarkable that, in some cases, the Holy Ghost made use of their powers of conjecture, as in the following, amongst many other passages:—Matt. xiv. 21; Luke, i. 56; iii. 23; John, ii. 6; vi. 19; xi. 18, &c.; but this was obviously only in cases in which it was not necessary to be dogmatically precise. In fact, the Holy Spirit sanctified to His purpose and made use of the natural talents and acquired information of the sacred writers, and employed each of them to treat of such subjects as their peculiar feelings, habits, education, training, and experience adapted

them for handling and discussing; employing St. Paul, for instance, to speak principally of FAITH, St. Peter to speak principally of HOPE, St. John to speak principally of LOVE, and St. James to speak of WORKS, which are the result of faith actuating, of hope purifying, and of love constraining. He has employed earthly messengers to convey heavenly blessings, fallible men to speak of infallible truth, finite understandings as vehicles for conveying revelations of infinite love. The Holy Spirit speaks in the Bible with man's voice, and through the instrumentality of man's thinking and reasoning powers; and the Scriptures were written, in the case of revelation, under the dictation of the Holy Ghost, and in all cases under His guidance and superintendence. The peculiar individuality of the sacred penmen was never absorbed or lost in the light of inspiration, but everything necessary to enable them to employ their own proper capacities and mental

powers in declaring what God intended to be written for our learning was given; so that what is said of St. Paul by St. Peter might be said of all the sacred writers, that they wrote 'according to the wisdom given' unto them, 2 Pet. iii. 15. In fact, the divine illumination imparted by the Holy Ghost when inspiring the sacred writers was like light shining through glasses of different colours, and receiving its shade and complexion inside from the colour of the glass through which it had come. The Bible is the work of man as well as the work of God, like the sanctification of the believer, who is commanded to 'work out his salvation (that is, his sanctification) with fear and trembling,' while at the same time 'it is God that worketh in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure,' Phil. ii. 12, 13. In the same way the Holy Spirit has led the several authors of the Bible to commit to writing what he considered would be profitable for instruction, and the

divine and the human elements, in the case of inspiration as well as of sanctification, coincide like the convex and the concave of the same circular line. Still the result is—in sanctification diversity of character, and in inspiration diversity of style. No two of the sacred writers have written in the same style. 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.' In the case of inspiration as of sanctification, 'the manifestation of the Spirit has been given to every man,' whether prophet, apostle, or evangelist, 'to profit withal;' and though his influences and his gifts are various and diversified in their nature and effects, yet 'all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will,' 1 Cor. xii. 4-7, 11.

We may illustrate the mode in which the *Holy Spirit* has made use of the sacred

writers by comparing them to AMANUENSES and to SECRETARIES. An amanuensis is a person who writes from the dictation of another; a secretary is a person who writes an account in his own proper style and language of what he is commissioned or directed to write. When the subject-matter has come through the channel of revelation, the writers may be said to have acted as amanuenses: when it has come through any other channel they may be said to have acted as secretaries.

Thus I have endeavoured to give as clear and concise a review as I could of this important question of inspiration; and I now feel fully justified in adopting the description which St. Paul gives of the Scriptures when he calls them holy, and says that all Scripture is inspired of God, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

To conclude, then, let us thank God for the Bible. Without it we should be immersed in moral and spiritual darkness,

without a star to guide or a lamp to direct us. But God has in mercy given us His inspired Word as a light shining in a dark place until the brightness of the eternal day of glory shall dawn forth. Let us, however, attend to this—that the Scriptures derive all their value from their testifying of Christ (John, v. 39; Rev. xix. 10). Without Christ the Bible would be as a tree without fruit, as a fountain without water, as a firmament without a star, as a heaven without a sun. But Christ is the grand, prominent, and all-pervading subject of Scripture. The natural sun, which God has created to be the material shadow of the immaterial reality of His glory, occupies only one fixed and definite position in the visible firmament, but Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person, occupies the entire expanse of Scripture. His grace and glory shine forth in the two hemispheres of the *Old and New* Testament, in the morning

dawn of the one as well as in the noonday splendour of the other. Let us, then, seek to have Him of whom the Bible testifies dwelling in us by faith as the hope of glory. But let us remember that, after all, the Bible is but an instrument which can be of no profit except by the divine illumination of the Spirit of God enabling us to understand and to appropriate its contents. Like the sun-dial, which is of no use unless the sun shines upon it and enables us by his light to see it, so the Holy Spirit must shed His explaining light upon the sacred truths of Scripture, and at the same time shine upon our hearts to enable us to discern and to acquire the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Finally, let us remember that one of the most precious and valuable proofs of the Divine authority of the Word of God which every individual Christian can have for his own satisfaction, is an humble and prayerful appreciation of its contents. Just in pro-

portion as we progressively acquire a sanctifying and experimental knowledge of that Saviour of whom the Bible testifies, shall we become more and more rooted in a solid conviction and an inward consciousness that the Holy Scriptures are really and in truth the inspired word of God. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God,' John vii. 17. He shall have an internal evidence, growing with his growth in grace.

APPENDIX.

ON 2 Tim. iii. 15-17—'And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of (or, is inspired by) God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.'

It may be well to show how this important passage, which is the CHARTER text on the subject of the preceding treatise, not only asserts decisively and categorically the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, but also as distinctly affirms their sufficiency as the divinely appointed standard of the religion of the Gospel, and so as necessarily to exclude our recognition or reception of any other rule of faith and practice. The argument which it contains on this point may be thus stated:—

All true religion consists of two departments

—1. FAITH, or that which constitutes our creed. 2. PRACTICE, or that in which our conduct as Christians should consist.

With reference to Faith, what we require to know is—1. What doctrines we should believe as true; and—2. What opinions we should reject as false.

With reference to Practice, what we require to know is—1. What actions we should avoid as wrong; and—2. What actions we should perform as right.

But this passage asserts that the inspired Scripture is profitable for all of these purposes.

It is profitable for '*doctrine*'—*πρὸς διδασκαλίαν*—or for teaching us what we should believe as *true.*

It is profitable for '*reproof*,' or, rather, for *conviction*—*πρὸς ἔλεγχον*—or for showing us what we should reject as *false.*

It is profitable for '*correction*'—*πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν*—or for showing us what we should avoid as *wrong.*

It is profitable for *instruction in righteousness*—*πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ*—or for teaching us what line of conduct we should adopt as *right.*

Therefore Scripture is profitable for the whole sum and substance of faith and practice, and profitable to the extent of making the man of God, whose office and duty it is to 'keep back nothing that is profitable,' but to 'declare all the *counsel of God*,' Acts, xx. 20, 28, as to doctrine

'perfect' or perfectly instructed—ἄρτιος—and as to practice 'throughly furnished unto all good works'—πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος.

Our Church thus holds and asserts the sufficiency and exclusive authority of Scripture, as she says in the sixth article:—'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.' The inspired word of God should ever retain in the estimation of the Christian its grand pre-eminence as the one and only MAGNA CHARTA of his redemption, and be thankfully and prayerfully used as the only infallible 'lamp unto his feet and light unto his path,' and as alone able to make him wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

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